

Remarks

The Oath/Declaration was objected to as not specifying a post office address. A declaration stating the present post office address of the Applicant and her post office address when the Declaration was made is included per the Examiner's request.

The drawings and specification were objected to with regard to missing and/or incorrect reference numbers. A replacement drawing sheet 2 is being submitted with the missing characters added and the Specification and Abstract have been amended to correct erroneous use of the word "spline" for the correct term "spine". (A replacement drawing sheet 3 is also being submitted which adds the character 40 to FIG 10 for clarity and consistency.)

The following claims were rejected under 35USC102 as being anticipated:

Claims 1-4 and 7 by Belokin, and also by Smith; claims 1 and 3-4 by Walters; claims 1 and 3 by Russo; and claims 1, 3 and 5 by Howard.

The following claims were rejected under 35USC103 as being unpatentable:

Claim 5 over Belokin and Howard; claim 6 over Belokin and Howard and Anderle; claim 8 over Belokin and Howard and Smith; and claim 9 over Belokin, and Howard and Smith and Anderle.

As indicated in Applicant's specification, the problem of properly and safely cleaning mini blinds has been lacking an effective solution, at least for the ordinary user, for a very long time. While many cleaning tools have been marketed, none enables a user to safely and thoroughly clean a mini blind with soap and water, as can be done with the system of the present invention. The structural supporting elements of the invention are specifically designed

to safely support the mini blind in a water-friendly environment (shower, bath tub, outside area-with smooth attachment surfaces).

Nearly all of the applied references are directed to suction cup attachment devices for shelf supports, towel racks and the like. (To this extent, they are similar to the Thomas and Russo patents identified by Applicant.) Yet none of the applied art discloses or suggests its use in cleaning mini blinds. *Indeed, the most pertinent art is the Madsen patent (found, but not applied by the Examiner) and Applicant's disclosed Mink and Malcolm patents, all of which are specifically aimed at the problem of cleaning mini blinds. The complicated structures of these patents are believed to provide clear and convincing proof of the unobviousness of Applicant's simple system for cleaning mini blinds.*

In an effort to highlight Applicant's invention over the art, the claims have been amended to recite a cleaning system that includes a mini blind and the structural supports. It is respectfully submitted that the combination of these elements is neither anticipated by, nor rendered obvious by the prior art. Certainly, suction cup-secured supports have been around for many years (Thomas-1925; Walters-1983;) as have various complicated and expensive arrangements for supporting mini blinds for cleaning (Madsen-1958; Mink-1990; Malcolm-1998). However, to Applicant's knowledge, no one conceived of anything similar to her simple, low cost invention, much less made it available to the public, before her invention thereof.

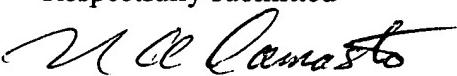
It is respectfully suggested that Applicant's invention provides the ordinary user with a very practical solution to a problem of long-standing. It is believed that the growing commercial success of the invention is further proof positive of its unobviousness to those of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention.

In support of this belief, Applicant is submitting her Declaration that delineates the substantial progress achieved in commercializing the invention. The facts in the Declaration substantiate a significant and growing acceptance of the invention in the marketplace and emphasize the need for patent protection.

As mentioned, the claims have been recast to recite a system including the supports and the mini blind. The amended claims are clearly not anticipated by the art. Further, in view of the above discussion, the claims are not believed to be obvious under 35USC103.

With this amendment, the application is believed to be in allowable condition and reconsideration and allowance thereof are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any question concerning the amendment or the application, she is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned attorney by telephone.

Respectfully submitted



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